

Exhibitors' viewpoint

Jim Cook toured the halls during the week speaking to as many exhibitors as possible as the visitors poured in. Here are their views on BTME 2013

The exhibitors once again reminded us why we enjoy organising this event as much as we do and their knowledge and universal professionalism helped make the show the success it was. It was also fascinating to hear their different perspectives.

Duncan and Christine Clarkson, from County Sport Surfaces, had made the journey over from Stockport. It was their second time as BTME exhibitors and it would be fair to say they had a good one! Speaking towards the end of the show Duncan said: "It has gone very well, we wanted to get orders from the show and we got them. We are a small company and don't have representatives out on the road so this show is vital for us so that people can put a face to the name. This show has turned us from a northern company to a national company. In fact it is international now as we had two orders from Germany. The biggest no-brainer of all is booking for next year. We are just wondering whether or not to get a bigger stand."

Many exhibitors had been concerned about weather conditions leading up to the event affecting visitor numbers and Sue Mumby, from Blec Global Ltd, said: "Obviously the weather this year was a factor and we were worried people might not want to travel. In some ways the weather may have helped people decide to come."

Sue said the company did not always make a lot of direct sales from the show itself and the main objective was to generate business for the future. She continued: "It is a commitment for everyone to

return every year and you have to feel that we are getting some return on that. I believe we get this return partly because of the timing of the show at the beginning of the year, so you can catch people who may need to buy things at the start of the season. Also I think having the seminars helps to guarantee high visitor numbers which are specific to the industry."

Syngenta again attracted a lot of attention with their stand, this year in Hall B. The company had launched a new nozzle and a demonstration of this was drawing people in. Caroline Carroll, from Syngenta, said: "We wanted to make our stand big and bold and ensure when people walk past they are interested. Our partner Everris reported back to us that we already had some orders of the new nozzles, so it must be working. We were a little bit worried that the weather would put people off but we have been really, really busy. This is my first year of doing BTME but my colleagues have been saying it has been one of our best years."

For some of the companies or organisations exhibiting at BTME for the first time it can be a case of putting the feelers out and seeing what interest they may be able to generate. Art 4 Golfers was one such example. Speaking on the Wednesday afternoon, Peter Forshaw, from the company, said: "Mine's a novelty business really and very different to the tractors and machinery around the show."

And how had it gone?

"The jury's out at the moment and I'm testing the water. It's the first time I've exhibited at BTME and I've taken several enquiries and



ABOVE: Duncan and Christine Clarkson, from County Sport Surface; INSET: Sue Mumby, from Blec Global Ltd; BELOW: Caroline Carroll, from Syngenta



will follow those up. Everybody has been very complimentary, but it's not an impulse purchase."

Another company at BTME for the first time was Compo Expert UK. Mike Butler from the company said: "Last year our turf consultant gave a presentation here, he'd never been here before, and he reported back that this was the best show in Europe he'd seen, so we decided we should have a stand for this year. We've had a lot of interest in our products."

Certis was another first-time exhibitor and enjoyed a very successful week in Harrogate. Alan Hogan said their main objective was to speak to customers who plan to use their new product, Mogeton, and continued: "We believe that BTME is the Mecca for if you have a new product, this is the place to come to."

The exhibition halls at BTME are not only filled with turf industry companies, and it gives a chance for colleges and other organisations to meet members and potential students.

Philip Mayes, from Merrist Wood College said: "This is the second year we have been here and the set-up has been really easy. When I first started with the college ten years ago we did a couple of BTMEs, but we haven't been up for a while because of budget constraints. We pushed to come this year and it has definitely been worthwhile. We need to promote our courses and this show definitely helps us to do this."

It was interesting to hear some exhibitors state they were using BTME to try and break into the golf industry after having specialised in other areas. Dave Burgess, from

UK Bundled Fuel Tanks, said: "We are aiming to get our name into the golf sector and generate interest in our smaller products. We have had some return customers from last year which was nice, as they obviously like our products. This is our second year and I'm very pleased we came back again this year."

It was a similar goal for British Sugar Topsoil's, Andy Spetch, who said: "It's all about getting brand and product recognition and specifically to try to make contact with people in the golf industry because that's a market that we, in the last 18 months, have worked towards entering. So the aim is to meet as many people from the golf world as I can. Traditionally landscaping has always been our prime market. We joined BIGGA nine months ago and over the years I had always had it in my mind to come to BTME, but we wanted to wait until our product was right."

"I do quite a lot of exhibitions and I must say when we were setting up, the people on the gate at the entrance were first class. They were so helpful and made everything easy with no hassle. Sometimes things can get quite fraught at exhibitions when everybody is trying to build up, but here everything was very easy and everyone was very accommodating and helpful."

A great deal of thanks must go to all the exhibitors at BTME 2013 for supporting BIGGA. Whether it was a company new to the exhibition who came along to see what the fuss is about and potentially build new customers, or an organisation that wanted to offer a face to existing members, without them BTME could not have taken place, and been such a success.



ABOVE: Dave Burgess, from UK Bundled Fuel Tanks



RIGHT: Alan Hogan from Certis, second right

BOTTOM LEFT: Philip Mayes, from Merrist Wood College

BOTTOM RIGHT: Compo Expert UK's Mike Butler

